

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1 - 21. cancelled

22. cancelled

23. cancelled

24 - 33. cancelled

34. (currently amended) A bonded casing paper comprising a nonwoven web material comprising cellulosic and synthetic fibres selected from at least one of polyamide fibres, polyamide copolymer fibres, polyester fibres, polyester copolymer fibres, polyolefin fibres and polyolefin copolymer fibres, bonded with regenerated cellulose or an epichlorohydrin containing resin and dried using a plurality of heated cylinders, wherein the web material has a ~~having~~ lower cross direction wet expansion profile than a similar web material comprising only the same cellulosic fibres[[,]] ~~wherein the web material is bonded with regenerated cellulose or a resin binder or a mixture of resin binders.~~

35. (currently amended) The bonded casing paper of claim 34 further including impregnation with viscose from which cellulose is thereafter regenerated to form a bonded casing paper material embedded within regenerated cellulose for packaging of sausage or other meat product or other food products.

36. cancelled

37. (currently amended) The A casing paper of claim 34, ~~suitable for the preparation of casing material for the packaging of sausage or other meat product or other food products, which casing paper contains a web material comprising cellulosic fibres and synthetic fibres, the web material being bonded with regenerated cellulose or with a binder resin or mixture of resin binders[[,]]~~ wherein the synthetic fibres are selected from at least one of (i) fibres made of an organic polymer selected from polyester, polyester copolymer, polyamide, polyamide copolymer, polyolefin and polyolefin copolymer and (ii) fibres made of a mixture of at least two organic polymers selected from polyester, polyester copolymer, polyamide, polyamide copolymer, polyolefin and polyolefin copolymer.

38. (currently amended) The A casing paper according to claim 34 37 in which the cellulosic fibres include ~~web includes~~ abaca fibres, vegetable fibres or mixtures thereof.

39. (currently amended) The A casing paper according to claim 34 37 in which the cellulosic fibres include ~~web includes~~ woodpulp fibres in an amount of up to 50% by weight of a total weight of cellulosic and synthetic fibres.

40. (currently amended) The A casing paper according to claim 34 37 in which the content of synthetic fibres in the web material is from 0.5 to 20% by weight of a total weight of cellulosic and synthetic fibres.

41. (currently amended) The A casing paper according to claim 34 37 in which the content of synthetic fibres in the web material is from 3 to 9% by weight of a total weight of cellulosic and synthetic fibres.

42 - 44. cancelled

45. (new) A method of preparing a casing paper having a lowered variation in cross direction wet expansion, comprising:

preparing a liquid dispersion of cellulosic fibers and synthetic fibers selected from at least one of polyamide fibers, polyamide copolymer fibers, polyester fibers, polyester copolymer fibers, polyolefin fibers and polyolefin copolymer fibers;

forming a base web of cellulosic and synthetic fibers from the dispersion;

bonding the fibers of the base web with regenerated cellulose or an epichlorohydrin containing resin; and

at least partially drying the base web using a plurality of heated cylinders, wherein the bonded base web exhibits a lower cross direction wet expansion profile than a similar web material comprising only the same cellulosic fibres.

46. (new) The method of claim 45 wherein the cellulosic fibres include at least one of sisal fibers, flax fibers, jute fibers or abaca fibers.

47. (new) The method of claim 45 wherein the cellulosic fibres include woodpulp fibres in an amount of up to 50% by weight of a total weight of cellulosic and synthetic fibres.

48. (new) The method of claim 45 wherein the synthetic fibres comprise from 0.5 to 20% by weight of a total weight of cellulosic and synthetic fibres.

49. (new) The method of claim 45 wherein the synthetic fibres comprise from 3 to 9% by weight of a total weight of cellulosic and synthetic fibres.

50. (new) The method of claim 45 wherein the step of bonding comprises substantially impregnating the base web with a viscose solution and subsequently regenerating cellulose from the viscose solution.

51. (new) The method of claim 45 wherein the step of at least partially drying the formed base web is performed prior to the step of bonding the base web.

52. (new) The method of claim 45 further comprising the step of forming the bonded base web into a tube; saturating the tube with a viscose solution and regenerating the viscose solution to form a tubular casing, wherein the tubular casing has adequate expansion for stuffing operations.

53. (new) The method of claim 45 wherein the synthetic fibers are selected from at least one of (i) fibers made of an organic polymer selected from polyester, polyester copolymer, polyamide, polyamide copolymer, polyolefin and polyolefin copolymer and (ii) fibers made of a mixture of at least two organic polymers selected from polyester, polyester copolymer, polyamide, polyamide copolymer, polyolefin and polyolefin copolymer.